

REMARKS

In the Office Action the Examiner noted that claims 1-13 are pending in the present application. The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-7, and 9-12, and objected to claims 5, 8, and 13. By this Amendment, claims 1-4, 6-7, and 9-12 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 5, 8, and 13 have been amended. No new matter has been presented. Thus, claims 5, 8, and 13 are pending and under consideration. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below, and reconsideration of all rejected claims is respectfully requested.

Examiner Interview

The Applicant would like to express appreciation for the personal interview granted by the Examiner on January 17, 2007, and for the telephonic interviews which followed. In these interviews, the Applicant discussed several possible claim amendments with the Examiner, although no agreement was reached.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §102

In item 5 on pages 2-4 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,061,698, issued to Chadha et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Chadha"). By this Amendment, claims 1-3 and 6-7 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §103

In item 7 on page 5 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chadha as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,293,629, issued to Conley (hereinafter referred to as "Conley"). In item 8 on pages 5-6 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chadha as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0133637, issued to Popp et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Popp"). By this Amendment, claims 4 and 9-12 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Allowable Subject Matter

In item 9 on page 6 of the Office Action the Examiner objected to claims 5, 8, and 13 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, claims 5, 8, and 13 have been amended to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5, 8, and 13 patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Summary

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-4, 6-7, and 9-12 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 5, 8, and 13 have been amended. No new matter has been presented. Thus, claims 5, 8, and 13 are pending and under consideration.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

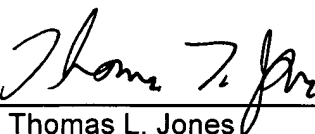
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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